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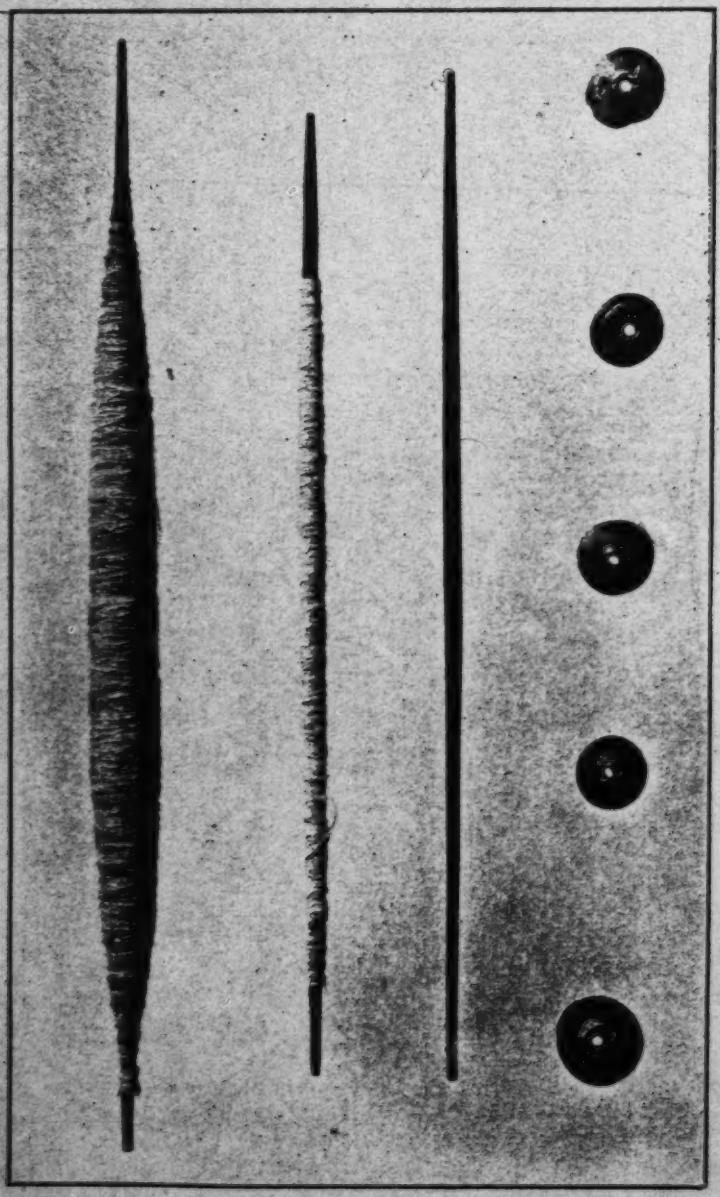

SPINDLES AND SPINDLE WHORLS
Banks of Rio Benny and Rio Waupuk.

[p. 50 C]

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sashes (M.: *yalasawa;* S.: *bamaksitna*), hammocks (M.: *silmika;* S.: *wak*), and into shot bags or hunter's bags (M. and S.: *malipuk*). The long sleeveless garment, called *wipal* by the Miskito and *kiškura* by the Sumu, is not made any longer. All these cotton textiles, although coarse in texture, are soft to the touch. They are of excellent quality and the patterns are always inwoven. Sometimes a fringe of the white down of the muscovy duck extends all round the selvage. According to Exquemelin (Engl. edit.: 251) bed sheets were also made of cotton in former days by the Miskito.

SPINDLE.—The spindle (M.: *blakat;* S.: *malkat, malakat*)[a] consists of a shank made from the hard wood of the pejivalle palm. It measures from 1 to 1½ feet in length and tapers to a point on both ends. The whorl or fly is inserted at about 2 inches from the lower extremity, and the whole presents the appearance of a gigantic top. The whorl is usually made of a rare, very hard and heavy marblelike rock, which occurs in different colors and is called *kupa* by the Indians. Turtle or tortoise shell, manatee bone, clay seeds, and even heavy wood are also employed occasionally for this purpose. The shape of the whorl varies considerably; most commonly it is of conical form. The largest diameter varies from 1 to 1½ inches, and the height from three-quarters of an inch to 1 inch.

SPINNING.—A very curious method is used to spin (M.: *blakaya, bitikaya;* T. and P.: *wišnin, wišnini;* U.: *tišhnaka*). A cotton thread, drawn by the left hand of the operator from a pile which she is holding in her lap, is attached to the spindle a little above the whorl. The spindle is placed in a calabash and is made to revolve very rapidly by means of the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. With each twirling movement the spindle is kept in rotation for about half a minute by the momentum of the whorl, during which time the operator is continually drawing out cotton thread, which is then wound on the spindle. This process is repeated until the spindle is full.

WEAVING.—The cotton thread is woven (M.: *lukaya;* T.: *kilnin;* P.: *enini;* U.: *daknaka*) on a horizontal loom (M.: *slabin;* S.: *slabin, silamka*) of most simple construction and similar to the one shown on the Mexican Codices, and still used by the Maya and other Central American tribes. It consists of a cloth beam and a yarn beam, which are connected to each other by the warp. The yarn beam is attached to a house post, about 6 feet from the ground, while the cloth beam is attached round the back of the weaver by a thick cord, enabling her to tighten the warp at will by merely leaning backward. The completed material is rolled up at the lower end. Looms of similar technique are also found in South America and Oceania.

[a] Cf. Mexican malacatl.

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## OTHER HANDICRAFTS

283 BARK FIBERS.—From various trees known locally as "mahoe" or "majagua" (M. and S.: *sani*, *wahpi*, *wahmatis*, *tdítu*) the Indians obtain strong bark fiber (M.: *sani*; S.: *wahso*). The best fiber from these trees is pulled off, split, cut into many threads of the desired size and made into ropes and cordage, hammocks (M.: *silmika*; S.: *wah*), matates or carrying bags (M.: *kūa*; T., P.: *wili*; U.: *wali*). These articles are colored with native bark dyes. The carrying bags are of various sizes and consist of coiled work without foundation; they are furnished with a head strap woven of one piece with the bag.

Bast fiber is also the common tying material of the Indians, and a supply thereof may always be found in the huts. It is also used as pack straps, which are put around the forehead and support the load carried on the back.

PITA FIBER.—Pita or silk-grass fiber (M.: *kara*; S.: *awa*) is employed for similar uses as bast fiber, and the articles made from it are practically indestructible. It is also made into fishlines, fish nets, and bowstrings, and used to repair shoes. Its extraction is very laborious. The pulpy covering surrounding the fibers is removed by scraping the surface of the leaf on a flat board with the aid of a machete or heavy iron knife. The fibers, which are thereby exposed, are then loosened and easily pulled from their bed by rubbing them crosswise of the leaf with the leaf pressed down upon the flat board. They are then washed to remove any adhesive pulp, dried, and rolled on the thigh into twine.

285 BASKETRY.—Basketry is not highly developed, although in such a well-watered country as the Mosquito Coast there is no lack of palms, vines, creepers, and epiphytic plants which may be used in basketwork. Certain vines are used in tying material, especially in the construction of the dwellings. The carrying bag of bark fiber or pita fiber takes to a large extent the place of baskets. From *wari* withes is made a round basket (M. and S.: *uslun*, *usnuñ*), which is used to store calabashes and other small kitchen utensils. Other types made by the Sumu are called by these Indians *wah-tdina* and *sidan*. A large waterproof basket, known locally by the name *pataki*, is obtained in trade from the Black Carib; it is made from *siwa* withes.

281 177 LEATHER WORK.—The art of tanning has apparently been learned from the whites. The bark of numerous indigenous trees is used by the Indians for tanning purposes. Leather is used nowadays for drumheads, masquerade dresses, sandals, moccasins, crude saddles, and belts.

383 RUBBER INDUSTRY.—Some of the Indians have learned the process of hardening the milk of the rubber tree (*Castilla* sp.) by treating